



The Ripline

www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/Union/BUHABS/

Issue 4

2000/2001

NEWSLETTER OF THE BRISTOL UNIVERSITY HOT AIR BALLOONING SOCIETY

Welcome to the first edition of The Ripline for the year 2001! So far to my knowledge there haven't been any spatial anomalies spotted near Jupiter. Nevertheless, there should be plenty to amuse you within these pages. To begin there's an article about the largest balloon meet in the world at Albuquerque, New Mexico in the USA. We also have the long awaited article from Mr. Davies. Finally, a big thankyou to all those who came to the Christmas Curry. There's a couple of pictures on the next page you should enjoy. Lets hope the weather will improve this term...

John Burnett

IMAX THEATRE @BRISTOL TRIP

8:30 PM SHOWING OF 'EXTREME'

THURSDAY 25 JANUARY 2001 - MEET 8:00 PM IMAX LOBBY

I've been to the Imax three times now, so there must be something good about it. The film we have chosen to see is 'Extreme', a new film about extreme sports. It includes Surfers, Snowboarding, Climbing (of the ice variety), and Skiing. A lot of it was filmed on a glacier, and the soundtrack is supposed to be pretty good featuring bands like Massive Attack. We will be having a few drinks down the pub afterwards.

The film is due to start at 8:30 PM, so we will meet at 8:00 PM in the lobby. This is to ensure we get tickets, as it will be a fairly newly released film. Anyone who wants peace of mind can 'phone and pre-book tickets, just call them during the day on (0117) 9151000. Look forward to seeing you there.

NAUGHTY HOWARDS QUIZ

JOINT EXPLORERS CLUB AND BUHABS PUB QUIZ

MONDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2001 - 8:00 PM - MANDELA BAR, UNION

The last Explorers Club Quiz was attended by over fifty people, and was very amusing indeed. Although fairly random as pub quiz's go, with rounds based on chocolate wrappers and microbiology, my team still managed to come second. This promises to be a very amusing evening, so do come along and meet some explorers (!).

INDOOR BALLOONING

WEDNESDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2001 - 7:30 PM - MR1, UNION

This classic BUHABS event involves getting the balloon out inside and watching a few bad BUHABS videos. A good opportunity to learn about flying if you haven't had the chance to get out with BUHABS yet.

BUHABS 15th ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND

SATURDAY 10 / SUNDAY 11 MARCH 2001

BUHABS has been going 15 years now, and to celebrate we've begun planning a stonking weekend. As well as regular members, also in attendance will hopefully be ex-members and Loughborough University Balloon Club. We've drawn up a rough plan below, and you are welcome to attend any number of events, details next issue.

SAT AM: MASS BALLOON FLIGHT

SAT PM: TETHER WITH ALL FIVE BUHABS BALLOONS

SAT EVENING: CELEBRATORY MEAL

SUN AM: SURVIVORS FLIGHT

NEWSLINE

OUT OF DATE BALLOONING NEWS PLAGIARISED HERE FIRST

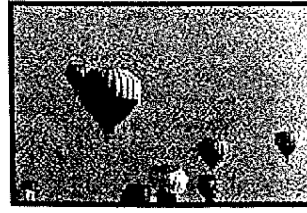
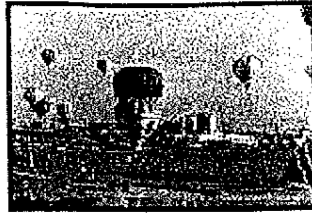
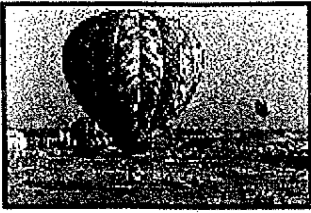
**THOMAS PAYS A FLYING VISIT**

In late November, Children at Bailey's Court Primary School in Bradley Stoke enjoyed a visit from Thomas the Tank Engine. A hot air balloon version of Thomas dropped in at the school in Breaches Gate as part of a two-week educational tour. The Fat Controller was also on site, ready to answer questions from the Children about Thomas. Annie and Clarabel were up to their usual mischief, and were not to be found.

BUHABS CHRISTMAS CURRY

EVENING OF TUESDAY 12 DECEMBER 2000





ALBUQUERQUE BALLOON FIESTA 2000, NEW MEXICO, USA

October 7th – 15th 2000 will go down in the ballooning record books as the period of the worlds biggest hot air balloon fiesta – The Kodak Albuquerque International Fiesta in New Mexico, USA. For the millennium year the organisers managed to get 1000 balloons registered (lets face it, 2000 for 2000 would just be ridiculous!) of which around 35 were from the UK.

I was fortunate enough to be part of this huge ballooning party and travelled out to the States with four others from Bristol; Lee Hooper of Bristol University balloon club, Rich Allen of Bath University Club. Scott Ellis, a BBC news reporter, and Susan Tanner, organiser of Bristol Balloon Fiesta, the UK's largest balloon meet. To play with when we got there we shipped out Lee's own beloved Bolt 77 balloon, Giraffe and the Bristol Balloon Fiesta Cameron 90.

Lee had been to this meet last year and so knew his way around. He had arranged with the organisers for us to be provided with what is best described as a monster truck for retrieve! After a very brief rest to recover from jet lag we spent our first day in the States collecting the truck, a 7 ½ litre, six wheeled bright red Ford Dually, from the dealers and then getting the balloons from the shippers

In the blazing sun of the New Mexico desert we set to sorting our tans and getting the equipment ready for a week of intensive flying. We were to be joined by two Americans and an Australian (friends of Lee's) as crew and also my Mum & Dad.

Albuquerque is a large city nestling on the edge of the southern Rocky Mountains. It is the world capitol of ballooning and everyone sure knows it! Everywhere you go there are references to balloonists; welcome signs in the shops, special promotions in the bars, even greetings outside the churches (Well I guess there would be as a giant Jesus special shape balloon was in attendance). Balloon Fiesta Park is a purpose built launch site and is divided into three hundred launching squares. With three or four balloons to each square space is relatively limited

In the air however, space is really limited! When you are flying with 1000 other balloons there is

considerable risk of bumping into others. This is made even more likely by the box winds that blow over the site. From surface to 800 feet the winds blow to the south, between 800 and 1000 feet to the west and above 1000' to the north. The result - balloons absolutely everywhere!

With so many balloons in the air you would think that a site to hold the meet would be selected from places with tonnes of open landing spots. That would be too easy! The balloon field is bounded on the northern edge by a large American Indian reservation, which although open to landings is best avoided. To the east is the Rocky Mountains. To the south is Albuquerque downtown and beyond that the infamous Area 51, which definitely has to be avoided, despite the fact that it allegedly doesn't exist!?. To the west is the Rio-Grande, but at last beyond that open desert which is ideal, but don't forget to avoid the rattle snakes!

Our first flight was absolutely awesome! I flew as P2 with Lee and Susan in the fiesta balloon. Unlike in the UK, private balloons, rather than commercial advertising ones mainly attend the event. This leads to a huge variety of designs and the sky becomes a patchwork of colour. In order to safely launch this many balloons everyone is allocated a launch official. These wear black and white striped suits and are affectionately known as the Zebras.

With our Zebra giving the thumbs up Lee took us into the chaos of balloons and then safely put us down again 30 min later next to a large nylon Arabian castle and a 100 foot tall wizard!?!?

Having travelled to a desert in a nice stable climate it is not unreasonable to expect that you should be able to fly all the time. Not so, for it emerged over the next few days that this years balloon fiesta seemed to coincide with the worst week of weather in Albuquerque all year! It rained, blew, froze, rain some more and stayed overcast. At least it stopped anyone getting homesick I suppose.

Being used to good weather the Americans do not have a need to brave marginal conditions and so many decided to spend the next two slots on the ground. For

us hardened Blighty Balloonists however, the low cloud was no problem and our second flight was a bit like a dull winter day it was so cold!

A further two days of bad weather saw us starting to look for other entertainment and we found ourselves in Old Town Albuquerque. In order to not be conspicuous as tourists we decided to buy discrete souvenirs and chose a set of Mexican Sombreros! Sitting casually on a wall watching the world go by we sat, the four ballooning amigos. Getting tired of the photos and comments being made at our hats in the town we retired to the desert with newly acquired toys – a pair of model rockets and began cultivating an interest in space research!

Finally the flying weather returned on the Wednesday night and as the gas balloons lifted off



into the dark (yes they did really take off at night) for the Americas Challenge Race we prepared for the flying ahead at the free bar of the international pilots party.

The following morning dawned fine, although for me, designated as retrieve things seemed to be a bit foggy. That free bar may not have been such a good idea. The flight was slightly longer than the others and ended with Lee landing Fiesta in the Sheriffs compound and Scott with Giraffe in a drainage ditch! After obtaining bail for Lee and drying out Scott we went home for breakfast!

No official evening flights are organised at the meet because the afternoon is set aside for parties (seems a good idea on the whole!) However, having travelled all that way we were wanting to fly, fly, fly, and so on the fine evenings went out into the expanse of the desert and did so. This gave me my opportunity to fly as P1 and I had two fantastic short flights in the vast open wilds. The desert flights were in marked contrast to the remainder of the morning mass ascent flights!

When flying close to a built up area Murphy's law states that you are bound to end up over the houses. This as always came true for myself and Lee in Giraffe. Flying at 5 feet over the roof-tops we commented on how pleased we were to be in a small balloon, just prior to landing on a back street outside someone's front door, next to their neighbours garage! After a tight deflation we had chance to look around and realised that we were not the only ones to be having such problems. All around the housing estate balloons were dropping in front gardens, back gardens, and on the road; anywhere it was possible to squeeze into.

Having had a tight landing the previous morning the last flight would surely be a little more relaxing? Wrong again. The box winds did not form as expected and the result was that at 1000 feet we were travelling at 2 knots north and below us at 800' were hundreds of other balloons travelling at 25 knots south. Trying to descend through such aerial traffic raises the heartbeat somewhat and by the time we got to the ground again were very happy to land and take a breather, but boy, what a thrill! Our final landing site was a 40 acre area of waste land. As we landed there were five other balloons to keep us company. It was however a popular spot and an hour later there were round 300 balloons in the one field alone. Good job landowners in Albuquerque are a friendly sort!

The week was an unbelievable experience. The flying was unlike any I had done before and the intensity of concentration required really took it out



of you even for short flights. I was pleased to have been flying with more experienced people but have a sneaky suspicion I'll be going back again soon to try it for myself!

Alan Hardwick
Loughborough University Balloon Club

A WARM WELCOME TO ED 'BIG BIRD' KAY

The Ripline is proud to announce the acquisition of new member to the BUHABS committee. Ed is taking over responsibility of our splendid website, and can be seen in the picture to the right munching his curry at the Christmas meal. He is a second year Computer Systems Engineer, but is alright really. He seems to drink reasonable brands of beverage at the pub, and is bad at pool, so should fit in well. If you would like to contribute towards the website, don't hesitate to drop Ed a line at the details below.

ED KAY

WEBSITE EDITOR -



BIGGUS MISTAKEUS MAXIMUS

The Ripline would like to take this opportunity to point out a mistake in last issue. In Tim Dudmans rather natty article about the Northampton Balloon Fiesta, the editor failed to make a correction during production. The mistake was that Les Greaves should be Les Purfield. The editor would like to apologise for any offence caused.

NOTES FROM THE PUT - BRISTOL BALLOON FIESTA 2000

To any of you new to BUHABS, or even the city of Bristol this year, you may not be aware that Bristol is host to the seventh largest free outdoor festival in Europe. This isn't the Wurzel's Appreciation Festival or anything to do with chocolate-coated cereals, it is in fact the Bristol International Balloon Fiesta. This would be the largest Balloon fiesta in Europe if it were not for the Lorraine event held in Metz, France every other year. This boasts numbers in excess of 500 balloons. Compared to Albuquerque in New Mexico, USA even Metz seems small as last year they had just under 1000 balloons attend the event. So compared with these two, Bristol's 150 or so seems minuscule, but it's not until you actually see this many balloons squeezed into the arena in Ashton Court that you actually realise just how much of an effect that much hot air can have.

The Bristol Fiesta attracts balloons not just from our local area, not even from just the UK but from countries such as the Czech Republic (more precisely the Budvar team but more amusing stories about them later). Even a team and their pilot from Belgium called Lips Geert (more fondly known in Flight Control as Gurt Lips). Of course the famous Bristol University Hot Air Balloon Society attends every year and if you're still in Bristol at the beginning of August this year, then you may be lucky enough to come along with us.

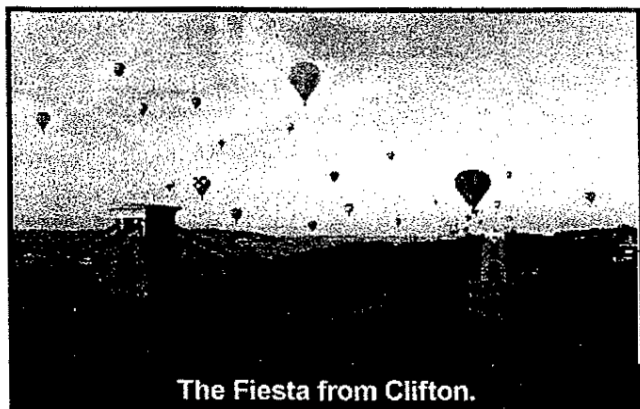
BUHABS has always had a good connection with the fiesta as our old Senior Pilot, Paul Spellward, used to hold the position of Flight Director, with Lee

Hooper working under him when he was a PUT. Then a couple of years ago, when Paul stood down, Lee, being a new BUHABS pilot, stepped in to take his place as one of the Flight Directors. As Lee took up this position, another BUHABS pilot, Tim Dudman (PUT at the time) went to work in Flight Control back in 1999. Then when I was chosen to become the next BUHABS PUT last summer I was also lucky enough to follow on the tradition of working for the Fiesta. So hopefully in years to come there will always be a BUHABS PUT sat up in the White Tower (closer to a dirty grey really) looking over the launch field as tons of balloons take off.

Although the planning takes all year, the few weeks, then days, before the event are unbelievably stressful, the big commotion really begins on the Thursday afternoon. For you members and the rest of Bristol that come to the fiesta get to watch the spectacular GWR concert with acts such as Atomic Kitten, A1 and Louise Redknapp appearing last year, I am stuck in the Balloonists Marquee checking in the pilots and their balloons. The only highlight being the previously mentioned Budvar Budweiser Beer Bottles special shapes team (tongue twister isn't it?) turning up, having drunk their 10 crates (that's 240 bottles) of promotional beer on the drive over here. Once the concert has come to its climax, the Special Shapes have launched from the Arena and I have finally finished in Check-in, it's on to the awe-inspiring Night Glow and firework display. This really has to be seen to be appreciated with the balloons lighting up in time to the music and fireworks exploding in the skies above Ashton Court.

By the end of the day I'm about ready to pass out, and that's only been one afternoon.

Friday morning begins at 0430 for the Flight Directors and myself, as we have to prepare the weather reports for the briefing at 0600 when the rest of the balloonists such as BUHABS arrive. This is Press Day so as you drive down to your launch space at the far end of the arena, you may spot such celebrities as Lynford Christie and Trudy 'the Vet' getting ready to go flying with their film crews in the



The Fiesta from Clifton.

commercially operated Shapes. New shapes from last year, such as the AXA sponsored FA Cup and the Double Velvet Toilet rolls, attracted the most attention, so always be sure to wander slowly past these in the hope of catching yourself on TV later on in the day.

One of the attractions of balloon meets such as this is the great number of balloons you get to see and the great number of balloonists you get to meet, such as our friends from the Bath University Hot Air Balloon Club. Even some of our older members were roped into crewing for the Fiesta balloon last year, so don't feel intimidated as the BUHABS special agents are infiltrating other balloon teams around us. During the 2000 Fiesta we, the balloonists that attended the event, claimed the European density record on Friday and broke it again the following morning, with 117 balloons taking to the skies in just 30 minutes. The same morning, a new European record was set for the most balloons to take off in a single launch with 132 balloons in 55 minutes. The only reason we didn't make this a world record is because of Albuquerque and its monopoly on the title as the worlds biggest balloon fiesta.

If the weather is kind enough to us this coming summer, then hopefully we will see seven launches and the BUHABS balloon will be involved in six of these, unless we get a special shape before then!!! Last year the weather was favourable for us every day except for the Sunday, when it poured down all

day. This was lucky for me as traditionally on the Saturday night the balloonists have a large fancy meal called the Survivors Dinner. This is such a swanky do it requires me to dress up in a suit, something that rarely occurs, but I did defend the student reputation and had a drinking competition with one of the members of the Fiesta office staff. This involved a greatly disputed number of bottles of wine and ended up with me stumbling about in the dance area, something I do even more rarely than wearing a suit. The rest I conveniently can't remember. Suffice to say I suffered from one of the worst hangovers of my life the next morning.

I was woken by my "kind" boss, Lee (not the happiest man after he had to sleep on the steps of the marquee due to nursing me and another random crew member before throwing us into the bunker bin) at 6.30. He informed me that I had overslept by 2 hours and that I had better be manning the emergency phone in Flight Control in 5 minutes or suffer the consequences. I immediately ran up to Flight Control, feeling very bad for missing the launch and even worse for drinking so much. It took just under an hour before I realised that the torrential rain had stopped any chance of flying that morning and that Lee had only just begun on his revenge for what I had put him through the night before. Needless to say, I was very glad that all flying had been called off for the Sunday.

Hopefully, after last year's Fiesta fiasco they will still be willing to let me back this year and I would



This years Fiesta, from B5.

recommend the event to any BUHABS member. The whole weekend is "packed full of fun" (I should be in advertising) as even during the afternoons when we are not flying there are still attractions in or around the arena.

Try - <http://www.bristolfiesta.co.uk>

Peter Davies

"There's nothing like good cider to make thy smile grow wider!" - Adge Cutler (Drink Up Thy Zider)

THE WURZELS

The Ripline feels it is time to educate all you uncultured lot about one of Bristol and Somerset's best traditions. I've mentioned The Wurzels before, and have faced nothing but ridicule, so read on and be enlightened.

One day in 1976, number one on Top of The Pops was very different. A Somerset voice belting out: "**I drove my tractor through yer 'aystack last night...**". For topping the charts was, almost unbelievably, The Wurzels' **Combine Harvester** – Ooh Arr! Against all odds, **The Wurzels** had brought their brand of "**Scrumpy and Western**" music to the pinnacle of the national charts, in one of the greatest surprises of all time. **Wurzelmania** swept the UK. Fans donned the latest Wurzels fashions – neckerchiefs, gaiters and "gurt big 'ats"; took up **cider-drinking** and **dung-spreading**; and the country, gripped in a **cyderdelic** trance, celebrated the long hot "**Summer of Scrumpy**"! The triumphant Wurzel greeting of "**Ooh Arr!**" echoed across the land as the Wurzels enjoyed chart success with hit after hit – **I Am A Cider Drinker**, **Farmer Bill's Cowman**, and many more.



Success on the undreamt-of scale hadn't come overnight for the Wurzels. The band had been started back in 1966 by the legendary "Bard of Avonmouth" **Adge Cutler**, who had written some fine songs about his native **North Somerset** and **Bristol**, and formed the band to back him as he performed them in local pubs and clubs. **Adge Cutler** and **The**

Wurzels quickly became local heroes in the West Country, and Adges **Drink Up Thy Zider** became the West's unofficial "National Anthem". Knowing a good thing when he heard it, EMI record producer **Bob Barratt** auditioned the band at London's

famous Abbey Road studios, and signed them immediately. A recording session was booked, not at Abbey Road, but at Adge's local pub, the **Royal Oak**, Nailsea, in Somerset – chosen for the live atmosphere and uninterrupted scrumpy supply required by the lads to give of their best! An EP and an album were released in quick succession, and further singles and albums ensued over the next few years. These records were (and still are!) all extremely popular and sought-

after in the West, but Adge never quite managed to make the national charts again. However, **Adge & The Wurzels** continued to gain in popularity and were frequently seen on TV as well as in concerts all over the country.

In 1974, sadly, the band learnt their leader Adge had died in a car accident. The remaining band members – **Pete Budd**, **Tommy Banner** and **Tony Baylis** – realised that Adge was irreplaceable, and made the brave decision to continue as a trio, **The Wurzels**.

Try - <http://www.scrumpyandwestern.co.uk/ajcutler>

SOMERSET SCRUMPY

12 lbs. of apples - 1/2 lb. raisins - 1/2 lb. raw meat - 1 gal. water at 70 degrees - champagne yeast

No Wurzel tribute would be complete without a recipe for Scrumpy now would it? First chop and grind the apples and raisins. These days a food processor will do the trick. Use a brewing barrel with an airlock - the sort of thing Boots sell. Put the ground apples and raisins into the water with the chopped meat. Stir thoroughly. Add the yeast and seal the brewing barrel with the airlock. Everyday swirl the barrel to stir the ingredients. After the first fermentation slows, about 8-10 days, move to a similar vessel for secondary fermentation. If you like a dry cider, add a second dose of yeast to the secondary fermentation. Seal it with an airlock. Let it sit until the fermentation slows to a very slow, almost imperceptible bubble. Move to a carboy to let the heavier particles settle out. Let it sit for about a week and bottle. The scrumpy will need to mature for about four months before you will want to even try it since it will give off a strong unpleasant smell and almost vinegary taste. The longer it is allowed to mature, the better, smoother and drier it will get.

BALLOONING AT THE NORTH POLE

Check this out. It was sent to the BUHABS committee to advertise an adventure planned for this summer.

Great men have tried and died trying to reach the North Pole, but now with the help of the Russian Air Force and its extensive knowledge and experience with Arctic conditions, this is a trip that everyone can enjoy with comfort and safety. Global Expeditions has combined with yellowairplane.com to bring this exciting adventure to anyone at an affordable price.

This years expedition will include the worlds very first North Pole, Hot Air Balloon Rally with balloon pilots from around the world. Global Expeditions has taken the worlds first hot air balloon to both the North and South Poles and there has only been two additional balloon flights since. There will also be free skydiving from a Russian jet aircraft for qualified jumpers who wish to add a tremendous North Pole jump to their logbooks. Global Expeditions has been traveling to the North

and South Poles every year since 1997 and has perfected this trip by adjoining the worlds most experienced arctic guides with the best cold weather equipment to make the trip safe and enjoyable.



But its not just a trip to the North Pole that makes this excursion the worlds greatest adventure. This expedition travels to Moscow for three days with available visits to Red Square, the Kremlin Armory, Star City (Russia's NASA) and the Bolshoi Ballet.

Participants will also fly in the huge Russian Air Force IL-76 jet transport, the An-74 STOL jet transport and the Mi-8 helicopter. Other stops include a full day visit

to Khatanga in Northern Siberia and Inuit / Eskimo village to see herds of reindeer and featuring the famous archeological mammoth digs where you will be able to take home artifacts that are abundant.

Try - <http://www.yellowairplane.com>

TOM LICKE'S DODGY PIC'S

This month the editor has been forced into revealing the following website recommendation;

<http://www.amihotornot.com/r/?eid=KQSLSQ&key=UKD>

Be sure that this will not go unnoticed, and revenge will be at hand next month.

SPECIAL RETRIEVAL

The festive season is always a good time for stupid photos, usually too obscene to publish in this newsletter. However, Special Retrieval managed to obtain this picture from a rival espionage division, Random Aquisitions.

Special Retrieval are beginning to wonder if it's efforts are being taken seriously in the annals of BUHABS, as no one has yet to send us an embarrassing photo. Be assured the address exists, and confidentiality is guaranteed.



If you have any comments, queries, or quarrels with The Ripline (or if you feel like flexing your literary talents and writing an article yourself!) please don't hesitate to email me (John Burnett) at the following address: john.burnett@yellowairplane.com